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34. *Effects of the recent enhancement of the tax on waste lands granted for coffee cultivation.*

Mr. D. G. Cameron of Quilon (Member, Nominated) said that, although the question of reimposing the land tax at twelve annas an acre on all waste lands granted for coffee cultivation seemed to have been definitely decided on by Government, he would make one or two remarks as one representing the owners of the bulk of the uncultivated lands granted under the Coffee Land rules. Government had been so liberal and sympathetic in their dealings with the planters in the past that it was their hope that Government would be pleased to postpone the application of the new tax for some time longer. He himself had paid about Rs. 20,000, or Rs. 30,000, during the past 25 years, as tax on behalf of owners who had not received one penny in return. Others had paid an equal amount, or at least some Rs. 2,000 a year, the bulk, if not the whole, of which would be lost to Government, if the enhanced rate were enforced. One Company which he represented, who owned over 6,000 acres, lost about 50 lakhs of rupees when coffee went out of cultivation. The Strathmore Estate, in opening and planting which about £50,000 had been spent, gave one crop of the value of £ 3,000 and then died out. That would show how rapid and how deadly the coffee disease was in its effects. The Company and others similarly situated continued year by year to pay the small tax of 2 as. per acre in the hope of some day being in a position to replant their land. The tax of 12 as. now proposed to be levied they would be unable to pay, and the result would be that lands which were of no use for forest purposes would revert to Government, the large trees, if any were left, being inaccessible. For such estates as were under cultivation, the tax of 12 annas was a reasonable and equitable one and no objection could be made to it. The Member added that the views he expressed did not represent those of the entire planting community and that the facts mentioned by him applied only to a proportion of the land affected.

Dewan's reply.—The order raising the tax on coffee lands was passed after careful consideration. His Highness' Government are not prepared to exempt any area from the operation of the enhanced tax.

35. *Damage caused by wild elephants to estates.*

Mr. J. Carson Parker (Member, South Travancore Planters' Association) said that he wished to move the attention of Government to the havoc caused by wild elephants in some planting districts. In one estate near Shencottah, the elephants were constantly harassing the owners and several rubber plants, three and four years old, were destroyed. He requested that Government might

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make some arrangements either to destroy these animals, or in any other way to keep them out of the planters' estates. It would be some help if elephant pits could be ordered to be dug at the places affected. Some inducement might also be held out to planters by Government to destroy the animals, which were of no use to the Forest department.

Dewan's reply.—I would advise the Member to see the Conservator on the subject, and I am sure that Mr. Rama Rao will do what he can, consistently with the interests of the Forest department.

The Assembly adjourned at 2 P. M. and met again at 2-30 P. M.

IV.—Public Works.

Desirability of consulting the Revenue department in the matter of irrigation works.

Mr. N. Velayudhaperumal Pillai (Member, Agastiswaram Taluk) said that the Revenue authorities had a better knowledge of the requirements of the ryots in matters connected with irrigation and the ryots also had greater convenience in representing their grievances to them than to the officers of the Public Works department. He therefore requested that arrangements might be made for all applications for irrigation works made by ryots to the Revenue authorities being forwarded by the latter, with their remarks as to the real needs in each case, to the Public Works department for disposal and for the annual irrigation maramat budgets being prepared in consultation with the Division Peishkars.

Dewan's reply.—The views of the Member are noted.

Allotment of funds for affording irrigational facilities.

Mr. G. Sankaranarayana Iyer (Member, Shencottah Taluk) referred to the difficulties which the ryots were now labouring under in the matter of agriculture and made the following suggestions for removing them :—

(1) Funds should be equitably distributed for the successful working of the Tank Restoration Scheme, according to the requirements of each puravu, and all wet lands brought under the direct irrigation of tanks, with unfailing sources of water supply thereto. The Member said that the necessary restoration works should be done solely at the cost of Government, irrespective of the class of tanks, major, minor or petty, and that no additional cess should be levied from the ryots.

(2) The Irrigation Regulation should be modified in such a way that the ryots might be made to bear a share

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